

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health

For the Year 1936.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
of the
HORNCASTLE URBAN COUNCIL.

Gentlemen,

I herewith submit my ANNUAL REPORT for the year ended December 31st, 1936.

STATISTICS.

Area, 1,414 acres. Population (census 1931), 3,496.
Estimated population (1936), 3,486.
Number of Inhabited Houses, 1,031.
Rateable Value, £14,382.
Sum represented by 1d. rate, £55.
Live Births: Male 19 (legitimate 16, illegitimate 3);
Female 26 (legitimate 26, illegitimate 0). Total, 51.
Birth Rate: 12.908 per 1,000. (England and Wales, 14.8.)

Still Births, 3.
Total Live and Still Births, 48.
Birth Rate (Live and Still Births): 13.76.
Deaths: Male 31, Female 24. Total, 55 (3 less than preceding year).

Local crude Death Rate: 15.77 per 1,000.
Local adjusted Death Rate: 10.75 per 1,000.
(England and Wales: 12.1.)

Out of a total of 55 deaths in the Urban District, 27 were over 70 years of age and 11 were over 80, this latter figure being the same as for the preceding year.

TUBERCULOSIS.

There were 2 deaths from Tuberculosis, giving a mortality of .6 per 1,000.

CANCER.

There were 6 deaths from Cancer (being one less than the preceding year)—1 Male and 5 Females, giving a mortality of 1.7 per 1,000.

HEART DISEASE.

The total number of deaths was 12, being 8 less than the preceding year and giving a mortality of 3.45 per 1,000.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There was only 1 case of Notifiable Infectious Disease as compared with 14 cases in the preceding year: this was a case of Lobar Pneumonia—a remarkable but very satisfactory coincidence, and definitely points to a highly satisfactory hygienic sanitary condition of the Town.

NURSING.

The Horncastle and District Nursing Association is affiliated to the Queen's Institution of District Nurses, and a Queen's Nurse is working in the Town. There is no subsidy from the County Council nor from the Local Sanitary Authority. Her duties are controlled by a Local Committee, and she works among the poor, and other cases when required to do so. The present Nurse is in the opinion of the subscribers entirely satisfactory and she has performed her arduous duties in a most praiseworthy manner.

HOSPITAL.

The War Memorial Hospital continues to give valuable service to the town and district. A scheme is under consideration for enlargement; it is also hoped that a Contributory Scheme will be in operation during the coming year.

Infectious cases requiring isolation are sent to the Skegness Isolation Hospital. There is a County Hospital Association in the town, which collects and administers a fund to provide treatment at Lincoln County Hospital for the poor requiring major operations.

MATERNITY.

There is no Maternity Home in Horncastle, but any serious maternal cases would be admitted into the War Memorial Hospital if a bed were available.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Two Nurses are provided by the County Council—one stationed in Lincoln and one at Louth. They are available for nursing severe cases of Measles or Whooping Cough, reported by the Teachers of the Public Elementary Schools, where no other nursing is available. Nurses have been appointed by the County Council to nurse under the direction of the medical attendant cases of Puerperal Fever, and Pneumonia Pyrexia, Ophthalmia Neonatorum and Pneumonia following Measles or Whooping Cough.

WATER.

Our efficient Water Supply continues to satisfy all the needs of the town.

The water is derived from natural springs at Cawkwell, at the foot of the Wold, seven miles from Horncastle. The supply is controlled by a private Company, which maintains and distributes a plentiful

supply of pure water. The water is collected by a number of bores, round which brick walls are built. Some of the springs are from sandy subsoil and some from chalky subsoil. The water flows from these wells into pipes leading to the filter beds and from these into a reservoir.

There appears to be an ample supply of water and the method of collection leaves no possible risk of contamination from outside sources. The water is clear and bright and of a very high degree of purity; bacterial contamination is absent. It is a pure and wholesome water suitable for drinking and all domestic purposes. Analysis again shows an absence of Acid, Gas, Bacillus Coli and other impurities.

There are two streams—the Bain and the Waring—flowing through Horncastle, which join near the western boundary and eventually flow into the Witham at Tattershall. There is a certain amount of contamination and pollution of these rivers, but efforts are being made to prevent this.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

962 Closets have the use of water. There are 39 houses with privy vaults in the town, being 6 less than the preceding year. In my opinion, the number might be considerably reduced and efforts are being made to do so.

HOUSING STATISTICS.

Two new houses have been erected by the Local Authority and a contract started for 8 more but not completed at the end of the year.

Total number of dwelling houses inspected for having defects (under Public Health and Housing Acts), 36. Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous and injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation, 0. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied, 4. Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority and their officers, 4.

SEWAGE.

The Sewage System (Ives Patent) is located about a quarter of a mile out of the town and has been in use for the past 37 years. The effluent passes to lagoons about a mile further away and after percolation through the filter beds flows into the Bain. The sewage system appears to be quite satisfactory, well constructed and carried out. The effluent is quite clear and without smell.

SWIMMING BATH.

There is a very good swimming bath situated at the West End of the Town. The Bath is well conducted and kept clean. The water is chlorinated and changed twice weekly.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES, DAIRIES, &c.

The slaughter-houses, cowsheds, dairies and bake-houses in Horncastle are inspected quarterly and for the most part they are clean and in good condition. The habit of drying clothes in bakehouses has, I am pleased to say, been discontinued.

The rainfall in 1936 was considerably above the average and in excess of the preceding year, and the hours of sunshine correspondingly less. These climatic conditions were responsible for a considerable amount of illness due to the affection of the respiratory organs.

Influenza was prevalent in December and though of a mild type many were affected and incapacitated from work. This complaint is generally treated too lightly by the public, and may be followed by serious complications unless medical aid is sought. With those who retire to bed at once on appearance of the first symptoms and seek medical advice, serious complications which might arise are avoided.

In conclusion, I am pleased to report that the general good health and sanitary condition of this ancient and picturesquely-situated little town is fully maintained. Horncastrians have every reason to be proud of the fact that there has only been one case of notifiable infectious disease; and that out of 55 deaths during the year 27 of them were over 70 years of age and 11 over 80, are statistics which show the general healthy condition of the town and compare favourably with those of any town in the county.

Housing conditions are improving and overcrowding being dealt with. General conditions of living are still on the upgrade and this is manifest by the better health of the community generally. I am confident that the general healthy condition of the town will in future respond even more markedly through the efforts that are now being carried out with that object in view.

A. C. GREENWOOD, M.O.H.

